



Children's Network (CN)

Event Honors Mentors

HS Connection Staff

On Jan. 17, numerous individuals and organizations were recognized for their mentoring services to the youth of San Bernardino County for the second annual Mentoring Recognition Awards at the Fontana Steelworkers Auditorium in Fontana, California.

To celebrate January as the national mentoring recognition month, the Mentoring Task Force Program of San Bernardino County recognized individual volunteer mentors, mentoring programs and civic organizations.

With a mission to bring together existing mentoring programs to help prevent child abuse, the Mentoring Task Force Program is a part of the Children's Network. The program coordinates between mentoring agencies and facilitating mentoring partnerships within the county.

During the event, 22 individuals and organizations were given awards for their mentoring services including, Arlington C. Rodgers III, a 17-year-old high school senior. He received an award for his participation in mentoring and volunteer work within the community and various non-profit organizations.

Brandy Nelson, Mentoring Resource Coordinator for Children's Network, said it is great that a person is already giving back to the community at a young age.

Nelson said she believes being a mentor is important to the many young people that do not have a positive role model in their life.

"A mentor does not get paid to be involved in a child's life," Nelson said. "A mentor is someone who gains nothing from being involved in the child's life except for the satisfaction of seeing that young person become successful in the things their doing in their community."

Kent Paxton, Homeless Policy Advisor for Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales, was the keynote speaker of the event and spoke to the attendants and award winners.

Paxton has served more than 30 years with San Bernardino County working in the areas of mental health, child welfare and social services. In 2012, he received the Children's Network Lifetime Advocate Award.

With the mentoring recognition event established last year, changes to the event were



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introduced this year to include more awards.

The first annual awards allowed people to nominate only mentoring service organizations. This year, however, the mentoring event featured organizations as well as individuals.

Some of the programs who received recognition this year include: Chaffey Bridge Mentor Program, Fontana Leadership Intervention Program, Kiwanis of Cooley Ranch, Loma Linda University Institute of Community Partnership, Walden Aftercare, and Young Visionaries.

During the event, members of the San Geronio Girl Scout Troop 252 conducted the flag ceremony and Polynesian dancers from Colton Joint Unified School District provided the entertainment.

"This year, we incorporated the entertainment to giving the young people a chance to perform," Nelson said. "They were really happy that they were able to perform at the event. Last year, we had the Boy Scouts do the flag ceremony, so this year we had the Girl Scouts. We make sure we are always including the youth in the program."

For more information about becoming a mentor and finding a match for the best mentoring program, contact Brandy Nelson at (909)383-9685.